

REMARKS

Summary of the Amendment

Upon entry of the present Amendment, Claim 1 will have been amended and Claims 2 and 3 will have been canceled. Accordingly, Claims 1 and 4-13 remain pending in the present application. By the present Amendment and Remarks, Applicant submits that the rejections and objections have been overcome, and respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application.

Summary of the Office Action

In the subject Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 2, and 4-9 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a). Also, the Examiner indicated allowable subject matter for Claims 3 and 10-13.

Objections to the Claims

The Examiner objected to Claim 3, stating that Claim 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As such, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to include all the limitations of Claims 2 and 3. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 1 is allowable and respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the aforementioned objections to the claims.

Traversal of Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of Claims 1, 2, and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,619,237.

As provided above, amended Claim 1 is allowable pursuant to the Examiner's instructions. Further, Applicant has canceled Claim 2. Applicant further submits that dependent Claim 8 is allowable at least for the reason that this claim depends from allowable independent Claim 1 and because this claim recites additional features that further define the present invention.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn.

Traversal of Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of Claims 1, 4-7, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

As provided above, amended Claim 1 is allowable pursuant to the Examiner's instructions. As such, Claims 4-7 and 9, which depend from allowable Claim 1, are also allowable for the same reasons.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejections of the claims are improper and should be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter for Claims 3 and 10-13.

Application is Allowable

Applicant respectfully submits that each and every pending claim on the present invention meets the requirements for patentability and respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate allowance of such claims.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that none of the references of record anticipate or render obvious the Applicant's invention as recited in Claims 1 and 4-13. The applied reference of record has been discussed and distinguished, while the significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

Further, any amendments to the claims which have been made in this response and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

///

///

///

If any additional fee is required, please charge Deposit Account No. 502456.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 7/27/06



Jason Van Truong
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 53,704

CANON U.S.A., INC.
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DIVISION
15975 Alton Parkway
Irvine, CA 92618-3731
Tel: (949) 932-3145
Fax: (949) 932-3560